

## ACHIEVING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

### LESSON 1: CHOOSING THE RIGHT EXERCISE PROGRAM FOR YOU



*aerobic*  
*anaerobic*  
*calisthenics*  
*cardiorespiratory*  
*isometric*  
*isotonic*  
*obesity*  
*tone*

### INTRODUCTION

What you eat and how much you exercise can directly affect how you look and feel. When it comes to your appearance, diet and exercise help you maintain proper weight, **tone** muscles, and have healthy hair and skin. When it comes to your health, diet and exercise can lower your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and other health problems including depression. Staying healthy and looking good mean following a balanced diet and exercising regularly. This chapter discusses guidelines for a healthier lifestyle that will help keep you fit and feeling great now and throughout your life. This first lesson specifically covers exercise, including types of exercises and how to stick with an exercise program.

Some people consider exercise a chore, while others think it's fun — and then there are those who avoid it altogether. With the right outlook, however, everyone can find an exercise program that they enjoy. More and more people find ways to keep fit, from walking to joining fitness clubs, because more

and more people recognize the importance of exercise to physical and mental health.

Although the fitness craze has hit many Americans, it has not yet reached most of America's youth. This is unfortunate, because not only is exercise good for you, it can also be fun. You can form friendships with people you meet while exercising on the track or basketball court, at the gym or pool, etc. You will feel better about yourself, improve your resistance to disease, and relieve stress found at school and work. Basically, being fit improves your overall health — both physically and mentally.

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#### YOUTH FITNESS FACT SHEET

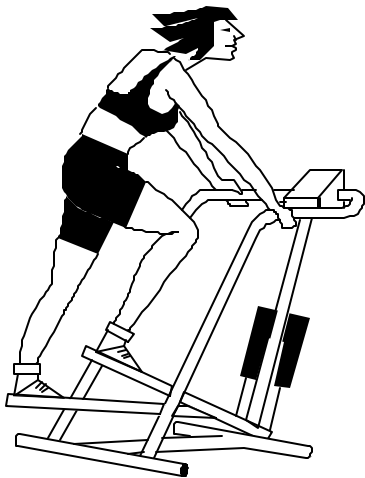
(adapted from the President's Council on Physical Fitness)

- Youth fitness in the United States has not improved in the last 10 years and, in some cases, has declined.
  - Approximately 50 percent of girls ages 6 to 17 and 30 percent of boys ages 6 to 12 cannot run a mile in less than 10 minutes.
  - Fifty-five percent of girls ages 6 to 17 and 25 percent of boys ages 6 to 12 cannot do a pull-up.
  - Boys generally perform better than girls on fitness tests, except in the area of flexibility.
  - Girls' scores increase until age 14, where they plateau and then decrease (except for flexibility, which continues to improve to age 17).
  - American children have become fatter since 1950 (U.S. Public Health Service).
  - Forty percent of children between the ages of 5 and 8 show at least one heart disease risk factor (i.e., **obesity** [overfat], elevated cholesterol, high blood pressure).
  - Only 36 percent of America's schoolchildren in grades 5 through 12 are enrolled in daily physical education. The average number of gym classes per week in grades 5 through 12 is 3.6.
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## TYPES OF EXERCISE

The four types of exercise covered in this lesson are **aerobic**, **anaerobic**, **isometric**, and **isotonic**. Each of these types of exercise has different benefits. Review the following descriptions and decide which type of exercise, or combination of exercises, is best for you.

Aerobic exercise works the heart, lungs, and blood vessels. As you exercise aerobically, your heart beats faster and you breathe in more air, so your blood can supply more oxygen to your hard-working muscles. This type of physical exercise improves blood and oxygen flow to vital organs, as well as lung capacity (the ability to take in and use more air). Aerobic exercises should be constant, uninterrupted, and raise your heart rate for a sustained length of time (at least 20 minutes). Jogging, brisk walking, rollerblading, dancing, bicycling, and swimming can all give you an aerobic workout.



Anaerobic exercise, on the other hand, works the muscles intensely in fast bursts of movement and does not require as much oxygen as aerobic exercise. Instead of endurance, anaerobic exercise requires bursts of power and energy, and the ability to maneuver quickly. For example, a sprinter working his or her leg muscles hard in a burst of energy to cross the finish line in a few

seconds is performing an anaerobic exercise. Many sports, from tennis to football, require anaerobic work to move from one point to another as quickly as possible.

Other forms of exercise concentrate specifically on firming and toning muscles and building muscle strength. Working against resistance builds muscle strength. You work against resistance when you try to open a tight lid on a jar or push a heavy piece of furniture across a room. Isometric exercise builds muscle strength by using resistance without joint movement, while isotonic exercise uses resistance with joint movement. For example, when you try to pull your locked hands apart, you perform an isometric exercise. You contract your muscles but do not move any joints. Most weight training, on the other hand, is isotonic. When you do bicep curls, you contract your muscles and bend your elbows to raise the weights to shoulder level.

Each type of exercise may work on one or more areas of the body to strengthen, tone, and develop your muscles, heart, and lungs. Some exercises can be classified as more than one type. Try to develop a balanced exercise program. If you jog, do push-ups as well for upper body strength. If you lift weights, add an aerobic exercise for your heart and lungs. No matter which type of exercise you decide to participate in, you will find it very beneficial.

### BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

- Improves heart and lung function
- Increases muscle strength, flexibility, and endurance
- Improves reaction times
- Helps the body fight disease
- Builds self-esteem and self-confidence
- Reduces depression
- Increases the ability to relax and sleep

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT EXERCISE PROGRAM

The type of exercise program you choose should have three parts: warm-up, conditioning, and cool-down.



The warm-up period allows for a slow increase in the heart rate and sends extra blood through muscles to warm them up. Your warm-up could include slow walking,

mild stretching, or **calisthenics**. Warm-up for five to seven minutes.

The conditioning period brings you into **cardiorespiratory** endurance and/or muscle strengthening activities. This is where most of your exercising occurs. These exercises should push your body to its normal limit, and when you are feeling strong, a little beyond. As exercising becomes easier, your normal limit should change. Walk or jog a little farther; do a few more sit-ups or push-ups. When weight training to gain bulk, increase to heavier weights; to build strength without bulk, keep lighter weights and increase repetitions. With muscle strengthening exercises, give your muscles a day off between workouts to rest. Or, work your upper body one day and your lower body the next. The conditioning period generally lasts twenty minutes

Below is a sample of a weekly physical fitness training schedule. Notice how it includes the warm-up and conditioning

WEEKLY PHYSICAL FITNESS TRAINING SCHEDULE				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Warm-up/Stretching	Warm-up/Stretching	Warm-up/Stretching	Warm-up/Stretching	Warm-up/Stretching
Conditioning exercises, to include strength training	Aerobic conditioning activities	Conditioning exercises, to include strength training		Physical fitness assessment of goal measurement session
Running		Running	Unit fun run	
Cool-down/Stretching	Cool-down/Stretching	Cool-down/Stretching	Cool-down/Stretching	Cool-down/Stretching
<p>Tuesdays and Thursdays are the "recovery" days. They allow the body to recover. Appropriate activities for these days include aerobic dance, kickball, volleyball, touch football, speed work, and/or fun runs.</p> <p>(Sample)</p>				

periods as well as a cool-down period which you will learn about on the next page. The cool-down period allows your heart rate to slow down, relaxes muscles, and cools the body. Slow walking, simple calisthenics, and mild stretching are good ways to cool down. Stretching during cool-down can prevent muscle cramps and soreness. Cool-down should last four to six minutes.

**CAUTION: BEFORE BEGINNING ANY EXERCISE OR DIET PROGRAM, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU HAVE THE APPROVAL OF YOUR PHYSICIAN**

### **STICKING WITH AN EXERCISE PROGRAM**

Even though many people know how important exercise is to a healthy lifestyle, they have trouble sticking with an exercise program. Follow these tips and you will find it easier to keep your resolution to become or remain physically fit.

- Think of fitness as part of your daily routine, just like brushing your teeth, going to class, or eating dinner.
- Set realistic and specific goals for yourself. If you have never jogged before, do not expect to jog three miles your first time out. You may become discouraged. Plan to jog one mile and stick with it, even if you have to walk part of the way. You will find that you progress quickly, building your self-confidence.
- Exercise at least three times a week. If you exercise less than this, you probably will not see much progress, giving you an easy excuse to give up.
- Keep track of your progress in a journal. It is motivating to look back at where you started and see how far you have come.

- If you are a routine person who likes for things to remain the same, keep the same exercise routine from week to week. If you get bored easily and like change, develop several exercise routines that you can alternate from week to week.
- Exercise with a friend or group. You will get support from others and feel more committed to stick with it.
- Choose a place to exercise that is convenient for you. If the place you plan to exercise is far from home or school, you may not get there as often as you should.
- Wear comfortable clothing and shoes to make your exercise experience as pleasant as possible.
- Stay positive and have fun. Remember that you are doing something good for yourself. Be serious and consistent with your exercise routine, but enjoy it as well. If you choose an exercise program that you just cannot learn to enjoy, try something else. There is an exercise program for everyone!

### **CONCLUSION**

Regular exercise is important to maintaining your health. It can make you feel and look better and help your body fight disease. Different exercise programs have different benefits, like aerobic dancing for a strong heart and weight lifting for strong muscles. No matter what exercise program you choose, remember that the most important thing is to stay active. So much in life today makes things easy for us — elevators, escalators, cars, electric appliances — that it's easy to get out of shape. In addition to an exercise program, take the stairs, walk or bike to the store, go bowling with friends instead of watching television. It can be fun, and it's all to your benefit!